AFNETOPS

AF CONSOLIDATES NETWORK OPS

AIR FORCE OFFICIALS have formally consolidated the service's network operations and created the Air Force Network Operations, or AFNETOPS, Command structure at 8th Air Force, Barksdale AFB, La., July 5.

The move is part of a larger Air Force reorganization of its network operations structure designed to better support the warfighter. It puts all Air Force units charged with network operations under the command of a single commander, Lt. Gen. Robert J. Elder Jr., 8th Air Force and AFNETOPS commander.

"Previously, we had commands focused on air and space forces, but no command focused on operations in cyberspace. That's what we're going to provide here," said the general. "In addition to increased effectiveness, AFNETOPS Command will achieve significant efficiencies for network operations, providing personnel savings to help realize Air Force recapitalization."

In addition to the formal recognition of the AFNETOPS command structure, Air Force officials also consolidated the Network Operations Security Centers, or NOSCs. Those responsibilities were previously decentralized among 10 Major Command NOSCs.

Capabilities now are consolidated under the 67th Network Warfare Wing, previously the 67th Information Operations Wing, at Lackland AFB, Texas.

The wing will oversee the stand-up of two Integrated Network Operations and Security Centers, or I-NOSCs, located at Langley AFB, Va., and at Peterson AFB, Colo., consolidating the former duties of the major command NOSCs. —*Capt. Carla Pampe, 8th AF/PA*
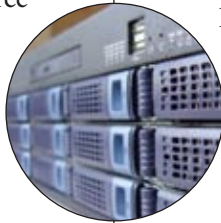
407TH AEG TEAM SOLVES COMM PROBLEMS IN IRAQ

A TEAM OF EXPERTS WITH the 407th Expeditionary Communications Squadron in Iraq provides one-stop service to customers with communications problems and requirements — getting the right people on the job to fix the issue quickly.

"The communications focal point acts as a maintenance operations center, help desk and unit control center, as the situation dictates," said Master Sgt. Jeffery Steagall, 407th ECS communications focal point, or CFP, superintendent. "We track network, telephone and radio outages, and work with the appropriate people to ensure that leadership knows about those outages."

Staff Sgt. Cidelia Hagan checks kits during an inventory at Ali Base, Iraq.

This one-stop shop drives the process to ensure that senior leaders' communications requirements are met and to track down the specialists needed to fix problems as they arise, he said. But senior leaders, although customers, are not the only focus for this team.

One team member, Staff Sgt. Cidelia Hagan, deployed from Tinker AFB, Okla. , said, "I'm responsible for assisting unit client support administrators with computer issues they can't solve. I also create user accounts for classified and unclassified computer systems.

"My favorite part of the job is fixing something small on my end that results in a large resolution for my customer. It is a little challenging to work in a high visibility job, though. It leaves little room for mistakes." —*Master Sgt. Andrew Gates, 407th AEG PA*

TACTICAL ANTENNA

Airman 1st Class Julianne Trulson / 435th CS

Airman First Class James McCrea, Ground Radio Maintenance, 1st Combat Communications Squadron, assembles a tactical antenna to ensure all the necessary elements are present after a temporary duty assignment to Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

RESEARCH BUILDS BETTER C2 NET

DURING A RECENT command and control, or C2, training exercise, at the 505th Communications Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., broadcast network traffic could not be transmitted through Internet Protocol TACLANE encryption devices.

After intense research, Brad Frank, a contractor in the 505th CS, discovered a way to allow mission-critical C2 data to be transmitted in broadcast format. This capability saved the 505th CCW $2 million in hardware and $80,000 in annual maintenance costs.

Along with saving resources, Mr. Frank's discovery brought a myriad of advantages to information transmission within the wing.

It enabled Ethernet broadcast traffic to be encapsulated into an IP packet that could be transported across a multi-point routed network. This feat was never before achieved with a TACLANE device. Second, as an encapsulation technology, L2TPv3 used minimal processor overhead, which drastically reduced operational and maintenance costs. Also, by incorporating a common platform for interconnecting networks, less hardware was required to pass traffic saving more than $2 million in expense. Lastly, the versatility of vital C2 systems was drastically improved.

Mr. Frank wrote a white paper regarding the discovery and its capabilities at the 505th CCW homepage: https://505ccw.hurlburt. af.mil/505trg/505cs/scm.htm.
— *Kyle Murphy, 505th CS*

ROCKET LAUNCH

Brian Gavin / 30th SCS

A Delta IV rocket carrying a payload for the National Reconnaissance Office lifts off from Space Launch Complex-6 at Vandenberg AFB, Calif., June 27. The NRO is the agency responsible for developing and operating the country's fleet of spy satellites. The Vandenberg launch site allows rockets to fly southward for delivery of spacecraft into orbit around Earth's poles for coverage over most of the planet's surface. Cape Canaveral is best suited for launches headed eastward to reach equatorial orbits.

ARMY, AF PLANS FOR NETWORK MODERNIZATION ARE SIMILAR

AIR FORCE AND ARMY officials say their plans for network modernization are similar to one another.

Army Lt. Gen. Steven Boutelle, the Army Chief Information Officer, and Lt. Gen. Michael W. Peterson, Air Force Chief of Warfighting Integration and Chief Information Officer, spoke at a conference for information technology professionals July 11.

Across the Department of Defense, the services are working to synchronize their respective operational and support networks. Eventually, the services' individual networks — the Army with "LandWarNet," the Air Force with "ConstellationNet," and the Navy with "FORCENet" — will all be tied together as part of DoD's Global Information Grid, or GIG, expansion project.

The GIG expansion project aims to bring increased bandwidth to all areas of the military — aircraft, foxholes, special forces and sustaining bases. That type of integration requires each service to ensure their portions of the GIG are compatible. The services have agreed to run their networks with an "internet protocol," or IP, architecture. That was one message the two generals had for civilian industry leaders who will in all likelihood be responsible for constructing those military networks.

Another message was that implementation of the GIG, the "transport," would bring a whole new spate of problems involving data synchronization, but solving the data synchronization problem is something experts will have to work on. — *Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez, AFPN*

66,000 CIVILIANS TRANSFER TO NSPS BY JANUARY

The performance appraisal cycle for Spiral 1.2 employees begin on the actual day of their conversion to NSPS and continue through Sept. 30, 2007. These employees will receive their first performance pay increase in January 2008.

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IS transferring more than 66,000 additional DoD civilian employees into the new National Security Personnel System beginning in October.

The plan ushers in the second phase in implementing the new pay-for-performance personnel system and affects organizations throughout DoD.

The first 11,000 DoD civilian employees were converted to the new system under "Spiral 1.1" of the phase-in on April 30.

Mary Lacey, NSPS program executive officer, recently met with senior leaders from the Spiral 1.1 transition to identify what worked well and what improvements are needed.

Officials reported a 99.9 percent accuracy rate in completing affected employees' personnel actions and no glitches in processing their pay through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

"We are pleased with what we are seeing thus far, at least with the technical aspects of the conversion," Ms. Lacey said.

The Spiral 1.2 roll-in will take place over a four-month period through January 2007, and will include civilian employees from organizations throughout DoD, including some overseas.

Affected components will have the discretion to convert their workforce any time between October 2006 and January 2007 to ensure enough time to train their employees, Ms. Lacey said. Ultimately, the system will apply to more than 650,000 DoD civilian employees.

Employees being converted to the new system will receive new performance plans that are clearly linked to their organization's mission and strategic goals. They also will be converted to pay bands that replace the grade ratings under the general schedule.

Officials emphasized that no employee will lose pay during the conversion to NSPS. Most will receive an initial pay bump to account for time already earned toward their next within-grade increase.

A conversion tool in the NSPS 101 course, posted on the NSPS Web site, helps employees estimate the value of their within-grade-increase, as well as their career group and pay band under the new system.

The ongoing NSPS conversion includes only the human resources parts of the system, which include job classification, compensation, performance management, staffing and workforce-shaping elements.

It does not include elements of the new system involving labor relations, collective bargaining, independent third-party review, adverse actions and the National Security Labor Relations Board.

DoD and the Office of Personnel Management have appealed a late February court decision blocking implementation of these provisions.

U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan ruled that they would fail to protect civilian employees' ability to bargain collectively. The decision was based on a lawsuit filed by the American Federation of Government Employees and 12 other labor unions.

Defense officials hope for a decision on the appeal by the year's end as they continue implementing parts of the new personnel system not caught up in litigation. — *AFPN*

> To find out more information about the pay pool process and to estimate your pay increase, check out: **www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/**

SUPPORT THE TROOPS WITH PHONE, GIFT CARDS

Available to the public since April 2004, "Help Our Troops Call Home" allows anyone, even non-authorized exchange customers, to send a Military Exchange Prepaid phone card to troops deployed for Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Since the program began, more than 100,000 orders have been processed.

In addition to phone cards, people can also send a "Gift from the Homefront" gift certificate. The gift certificates, available in denominations of $5, $10, $20, $25 and $50, are redeemable at any AAFES facility worldwide, including more than 50 PXs/BXs. More than 65,000 "Gifts from the Homefront" gift certificates have been distributed to

troops in OEF/OIF since the program began in March 2003.

Those wishing to send "Gift From the Homefront" gift certificates or calling cards can log on to www.aafes.org. From there, the gift certificates and phone cards can be sent to an individual service member or distributed to "any service member."